

MISSOURI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL FOR THE BLIND



2009

ANNUAL REPORT

OCTOBER 1, 2008—SEPTEMBER 30, 2009

MISSOURI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL FOR THE BLIND

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LETTER FROM CHAIR

December 28, 2009

Dear Fellow Missourians:

As Chair of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), it is my honor to submit the 2009 Annual Report on the status of services, in accordance with Section 105(5) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Congress in 1998. The SRC, created by Executive Order 93-01, is responsible for reviewing, analyzing and advising Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB), an agency in the Missouri Division of Family Support (DFS), on its policies and provision of rehabilitation services to Missourians who are blind or visually impaired.

The SRC is dedicated to working with RSB to assist blind and visually impaired Missourians become self-supporting and fully participating members of society. During the period of this report, the Council has worked cooperatively in many areas of interest with RSB to improve the range, scope and quality of services for blind and visually impaired Missourians. Our quarterly reviews of agency policies, procedures and operations, along with public forums and our "customer satisfaction survey," have given clients a critical source of input into the rehabilitation process.

We feel this report provides an informative overview of RSB and the activities of the SRC. We would be pleased to answer any questions about this report, the operations of RSB, or the work of the State Rehabilitation Council.

The services that RSB oversees are critical to this growing segment of our population. Diabetic retinopathy and macular degeneration are leading causes of vision loss in the United States and are on the rise. The American Journal of Ophthalmology estimates that legal blindness will increase by nearly 75% by 2030. The role that RSB plays in the lives of visually impaired Missourians is critical and of mounting importance. The SRC is committed to its purpose and is rising to meet the growing challenges facing RSB and visually impaired Missourians.

Respectfully Submitted,

Clay C. Berry
State Rehabilitation Council Chairman
Director of Education & Rehabilitation
Alphapointe Association for the Blind

LETTER FROM DEPUTY DIRECTOR

December 28, 2009

Dear Fellow Missourians:

It is my honor to present the 2009 Annual Report. In federal fiscal year 2009, Family Support Division /Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB) assisted 266 individuals with disabilities to successfully achieve their vocational goals. Employment adds value to the lives of Missourians with disabilities and contributes to the economic development and prosperity of the State. I thank those businesses in Missouri that have shown a strong commitment to hiring qualified individuals who are blind and severely visually impaired. RSB assisted 108 blind and severely visually impaired Missourians to advance their independency and self-sufficiency through the Independent Living Program, Part B and 988 older blind Missourians reach their positive outcome goals through the Older Blind Services program. Rehabilitation Services for the Blind, as the vocational rehabilitation agency serving blind and visually impaired Missourians, of course addresses the physical loss of vision through the strategies of restoration, accommodation, and compensation, we also address deeply engrained misconceptions about what blind persons can not do because they can not see. This requires the team of rehabilitation professionals at RSB to possess specialized in-depth knowledge about abilities and capabilities of blind people. The highly skilled and dedicated staff at RSB use that specialized knowledge to influence a positive attitudinal change in society and in blind persons themselves. I am extraordinarily proud to have the opportunity to be part of this team. The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) for the blind continues to provide strong active support and advise, along with a decisive commitment to the highest quality service for our clients and the abilities of persons who are blind or severely visually impaired.

This annual report to the Governor of Missouri and the Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services Administration provides valuable information for understanding what RSB accomplished in 2009, in partnership with clients, advocates, other stakeholders and the SRC for the blind. I thank you and appreciate you for working with us in this important mission.

Thank you,

Mark Laird
Deputy Director
Rehabilitation Services for the Blind

MEMBERSHIP

MISSOURI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL FOR THE BLIND COUNCIL MEMBERS (SRC) DURING FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2009

Members

Clay Berry
Community Rehabilitation Program

Ceil Callahan
Client Assistance Program

Gene Fleeman
Business, Industry & Labor

Kimberly Gerlt
Liaison

David W. Hertweck
Business, Industry & Labor

Beverly Kaskadden
Former Client

Phyllis Lovett
Missouri Council of the Blind

Russell McCampbell
Business, Industry & Labor

John Thompson
Business, Industry & Labor

Donna Borgmeyer
Statewide Independent Living Council

Brady Clevenger
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

Pat Fox
Representative of an individual with
disabilities who have difficulty
representing themselves or are
unable due to their disabilities.

Rose Marie Hopkins
Workforce Investment Board

Mark Laird
Deputy Director
Rehabilitation Services for the Blind

Lawrence Luck
Chairman
Business, Industry & Labor

Jim Sucharski
State Educational Agency

Brian Wekamp
National Federation for the Blind

PURPOSE

The purpose of the SRC includes, but is not limited to:

- Act as a forum through which blind citizens, parents, providers, and other interested Missourians can voice their opinions and constructive criticisms, make recommendations and give public recognition for services being performed on their behalf by RSB;
- Serve jointly with RSB in its activities to improve the services, programs and facilities for blind and visually impaired consumers;
- Receive from RSB information concerning the intents and objectives of RSB so that the Council, in turn, can pass this information on to blind consumers.

FUNCTIONS

The SRC's functions include, but are not limited to, acting in partnership with RSB to:

- Review, analyze, and advise RSB regarding RSB's performance of responsibilities, relating especially to eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services; the extent, scope and effectiveness of VR services that RSB provides;
- Assist RSB with the development and review of the State goals and priorities;
- Assist in the preparation of the State plan, amendments to the plan, needs assessments, and evaluations;
- Conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of VR services and other functions performed by RSB through Consumer Satisfaction Surveys;
- Prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor, to the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) of the U. S. Department of Education, and to the Director of the Family Support Division (FSD);
- Coordinate with other councils within the State;
- Advise the FSD/RSB and provide for coordination in establishing a working relationships between FSD/RSB and the Statewide Independent Living Council and Centers for Independent Living in Missouri;
- Select a pool of individuals to serve as impartial hearing officers for VR applicants and recipients who wish to appeal a decision of RSB.

SUCCESS STORY

OREN CLAIBORNE

Oren Claiborne is a totally-blind 52-year-old man living in Joplin. RSB opened a vocational rehabilitation (VR) case with Oren in August of 2008. Oren had a good work history in manufacturing, but had been unemployed for over a year when he applied for VR services.

Brady Clevenger, Oren's assigned VR counselor, authorized a community-based job assessment through Community Employment, Inc. of Joplin, and following that pursued job development in the Joplin area.

A potential employer, Cramer Meat Company, was identified. The owner of the business was approached about the possibility of hiring Oren, but the owner was hesitant at first about the prospect of hiring a totally-blind worker.

An on-the-job training agreement was reached between Cramer Meat and Oren's counselor. Oren's job duties were to be the weighing and packaging of various meats. One aspect of the job, the actual weighing of the meat, was not possible for Oren initially. The scale used at the shop was not accessible for a blind person. So, Oren's counselor ordered a talking butcher's scale. For a couple of weeks, until that equipment could arrive and be put in place, a job coach from Community Employment was used to verbally relay to Oren the scale readings. Once the talking scale arrived, Oren could perform all aspects of his job independently.

After the 90 days of the OJT agreement expired, Cramer Meat hired Oren full time. Once it was determined Oren's employment was stable, and both he and the employer were satisfied, and all the services agreed upon had been delivered, Oren's case was closed successfully.

YEAR IN REVIEW

- During Federal Fiscal Year 2009, progress was made on the development of RSB's new web based electronic case management system, System 7. All district offices and central office are able to add individual case notes, create client demographics, and create an itinerary in System 7, which is fully accessible using large print and speech output devices.
- The SRC Evaluation Committee assisted RSB staff with their Comprehensive Needs Assessment. This assessment concentrates on identifying individuals with the most severe disabilities, minorities and individuals with disabilities who are un-served and under-served. Surveys were sent to state-wide community contacts, such as Senior Centers, Nutrition Centers, Lions Clubs, etc., to identify areas of unmet needs.
- In August 2009 RSB put their self employment resource guide on their website. This guide provides a detailed outline of the steps consumers should complete to begin a successful business through RSB.
- In April 2009 RSB underwent a Federal RSA 107 Monitoring Review. RSB Staff and Council members attended numerous meetings during this review. At the end of this reporting period, the final report had not been delivered.

YEAR IN REVIEW (CONT)

- In January 2009, RSB underwent a two (2) year statewide single audit. The final report was not available at the end of this reporting period.
- RSB received notification that they successfully passed all Evaluation Standards and Performance Indicators (see chart on page 13).
- On January 28, 2009, Ronald Levy was confirmed by the Missouri Senate as the Director of Department of Social Services (DSS).
- In May 2009 Alyson Campbell was appointed Director of the Family Support Division.
- During the May 2009 SRC meeting the Council held elections for new Officers. The Council voted and unanimously elected the following individuals:

Chair: Clay Berry

Vice-Chair: Beverly Kaskadden

Secretary: Lawrence Luck

Executive Board Members:

Russell McCampbell and Brian Wekamp

- At the November 2008 SRC meeting the Council approved an amendment to the Bylaws to include a standing membership committee. This committee will be responsible for monitoring current terms for expiring memberships as well as recruiting potential members.

PUBLIC FORUMS

The SRC has continued to hold public forums throughout the state which allows individuals who are receiving services, and individuals who refer clients to RSB, to voice opinions and concerns about the services of RSB. During federal fiscal year 2009 the SRC held public forums in the following locations:

1. Kirksville (November 2008)
2. St. Charles (February 2009)
3. Jefferson City (May 2009)
4. St. Joseph (August 2009)

Public Forum Topics Of Discussion:

- Transportation barriers faced by blind and/or visually impaired individuals;
- RSB staff advocating and building partnerships with employers for job placements;
- Brief presentations were given to the SRC by Midland Empire Resources for Independent Living (MERIL), Rural Advocates for Independent Living (RAIL), and St. Charles' One Stop Career Center.

Increasing Participation:

The SRC discussed in length, ways to increase participation at public forums. Knowing the obstacles public transportation poses, the SRC tried a conference call for those individuals who wanted to participate but were unable to attend. Although participation during the first attempt was low, the SRC will continue to explore creative and progressive avenues to increase participation.

SUCCESS STORY

JERRY BUENEMAN

Jerry Bueneman had been self-employed as a woodworker for the past 10 years when he was referred to RSB. His woodworking shop is located beside his home in Wright City, Missouri. Jerry reports that he has built “..just about anything someone wants made out of wood” for the last 30 years. He specializes in fine furniture, including kitchen cabinets, entertainment centers, tables and hope chests (**see photos**).

Jerry’s vision loss progressed to the point where he sought out Rehabilitation Services for the Blind so that he could retain the self-employment he has used to sustain himself and his family. Jerry was provided with a Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV), a talking tape measure, special glasses and magnifiers to perform tasks such as designing projects, reading blueprints and doing the many measurements necessary to produce the precision crafted wood furniture he is known for. Jerry has often said that people who see his work are amazed that someone with his visual disability is capable of producing such beautiful projects. Jerry just considers himself as a self-employed individual who happens to have a visual impairment.



CONSUMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS

Consumer Satisfaction Surveys are administered to individuals who have closed cases with RSB. These surveys are administered on a quarterly basis. Two different surveys are sent, one to individuals whose cases are closed in competitive employment and one to all individuals whose cases were closed in any status other than competitive employment.

Below is the survey results for Competitive Employment, this information is based on a 25% return rate:

Questions	Satisfaction Level
1. The choices of services available from RSB were sufficient to meet my needs.	83%
2. I had the final say in the selection of a vocational goal.	83%
3. I had the final say in the selection of service providers.	80%
3. My rehabilitation plan was individualized to meet my goals.	87%
5. I received services from RSB without excessive waiting.	78%
6. RSB staff returned my phone calls promptly.	85%
7. RSB staff were knowledgeable about my needs as a person who is blind.	83%
8. RSB staff helped me build my confidence in my abilities.	76%
9. As a result of the services provided by RSB, my present work situation is better than it was before I began the program.	79%
10. The support I received from RSB following my employment was adequate to ensure continued success.	75%
11. I am pleased with the overall outcome of my experience in the vocational rehabilitation program provided by RSB.	72%
12. RSB staff gave me the help I needed to find employment.	78%
13. The services RSB provided were adequate to help me secure employment.	78%
14. Upon completion of my vocational rehabilitation plan, I was prepared to seek employment.	75%

CONSUMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS, (CONT.)

Below are survey results for all other cases closed in any status other than competitive employment. The information below is based on a 10% return rate:

Questions	Satisfaction Level
1. The choices of services available from RSB were sufficient to meet my needs.	74%
2. I had the final say in the selection of a rehabilitation goal.	78%
3. I had the final say in the selection of service providers.	76%
4. My rehabilitation plan was individualized to meet my goals.	78%
5. I received services from RSB without excessive waiting.	78%
6. RSB staff returned my phone calls promptly.	74%
7. RSB staff were knowledgeable about my needs as a person who is blind.	74%
8. RSB staff helped me build confidence in my abilities.	78%
9. The services RSB provided were adequate to help me reach my rehabilitation goal.	74%
10. I am please with the overall outcome of my experience in the vocational rehabilitation program provided by RSB.	76%

SUCCESS STORY

KATHERINE MOORE

Ms. Moore's story begins in March, 2009. She'd gone to the local kindergarten center for a parent-teacher event for her daughter, and lost a contact lens. A staff person at the kindergarten center was a former RSB employee and recommended that Ms. Moore call and apply for services.

Ms. Moore's vision loss is a result of keratoconus. With this condition, eyeglasses will not improve vision, but there is some success with special contact lenses. During the course of Ms. Moore's vocational rehabilitation (VR) program, Ms. Moore had several low vision exams, and office visits to determine the best method of treatment to enhance the vision she had. She was fitted with piggyback contact lenses; using one pair of soft contact lenses to hold another pair of rigid contact lenses in place. This solution worked well for her.

Ms. Moore initial vocational interest was related to her employment history as a medical transcriptionist. She worked in this field for 10 years prior to coming to RSB. Her vision loss, and shoulder problems caused her to give up this employment. But she had a dream to become a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). While she'd worked, she'd taken classes on and off at Southeast Missouri State University (SEMO) for several years, with a concentration in business. Yet she still wanted to become a nurse. After several unsuccessful attempts to obtain admission to a local LPN course, she changed her vocational goal, and decided to continue with her education to get a Bachelor's degree. With continued RSB support, and a new computer, printer, CCTV, and ZoomText software, Ms. Moore was successful in her educational endeavors. In May 2008, she graduated from Southeast Missouri State University (SEMO) with a Bachelor's degree in General Studies, with an emphasis in Business Administration and Social Work. She then began to apply for employment.

RSB supported Ms. Moore's applications for employment by paying for her travel expenses to interview for Eligibility Specialist positions in Kansas City, and coaching her on interview techniques. While she was not selected for these jobs, the experience of interviewing several times paid off in giving her self confidence for future interviews. Ms. Moore was told of possible employment opportunities with the IRS in the Kansas City area, and had just started to pursue this line when there was a federal hiring freeze put in place. She was disappointed, but soon was told of an employment opportunity with the Young Williams Call Center in Jefferson City. Ms. Moore sent in a letter of interest and resume. She was contacted to interview, and took the opportunity. RSB prepared her for the interview, discussing possible interview questions with her, and role playing various scenarios. RSB paid for her travel expenses from home to Jefferson City for the interview. Ms. Moore was offered employment after her interview, which she accepted. RSB funded her house-hunting travel as well as relocation expenses in order for her to move and begin this new employment on March 23, 2009. Ms. Moore now lives in Jefferson City and is very happy with her employment.

EVALUATION STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

EVALUATION STANDARD 1 ASSESSES VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION'S IMPACT ON EMPLOYMENT	Score	Standard	Passed
<u>Performance Indicator 1.1 – Change in Employment Outcomes</u> Indicator 1.1 is the difference between the number of individuals exiting the VR program who achieved an employment outcome during the current performance period and the number of individuals exiting the VR program who achieved an employment outcome during the previous performance period.	531	Equal/Exceed	X
<u>Performance Indicator 1.2 – Percent of Employment Outcomes</u> Indicator 1.2 is the percentage of individuals exiting the program during the performance period who have achieved an employment outcome after receiving services.	79.70%	>68.9%	X
<u>Performance Indicator 1.3 – Competitive Employment Outcomes</u> Indicator 1.3 measures the percentage who exit the VR program in employment in integrated settings with or without ongoing support services, self-employment, or BEP (Business Enterprise Program) employment with hourly rate of earnings equivalent to at least the federal or state minimum wage rate, whichever is higher, based on all the individuals exiting the program who have achieved an employment outcome after receiving services.	87.40%	>35.4%	X
<u>Performance Indicator 1.4 – Significance of Disability</u> Indicator 1.4 is the percentage of those individuals identified in Indicator 1.3 who have significant disabilities.	100%	>89%	X
<u>Performance Indicator 1.5 – Earnings Ratio</u> Indicator 1.5 is the ratio of the average hourly earnings of all individuals in competitive employment to the average hourly earnings of all employed individuals in the state.	.688	>.59	X
<u>Performance Indicator 1.6 – Self-Support</u> Indicator 1.6 is measured as follows: for those identified in Performance Indicator 1.3, the difference in the percentage of individuals who at program entry reported their income as the largest single source of support, and the percentage that reported their personal income as the largest single source of support at program exit.	30.80%	>30.4%	X
EVALUATION STANDARD 2 ASSESSES EQUAL ACCESS OPPORTUNITY FOR INDIVIDUALS OF ALL GROUPS AND BACKGROUNDS			
<u>Performance Indicator 2.1 – Minority Background Service Rate</u> The ratio of the percent of individuals with a minority background to the percent of individuals without a minority background exiting the program who received VR services.	89.6%	>.80	X

CONSUMERS SERVED

During federal fiscal year 2009, RSB opened 553 new cases and served a total of 1,544 consumers.

In federal fiscal year 2009, RSB successfully rehabilitated 266 Missourians in their employment goal. The following data profiles show those successful closures:

Successful Closures	
Competitive Employment	200
Homemaker	28
Employment through the Business Enterprise Program	9
Self Employment	29
Total	266

Wages at Closure	
Annual Wage Range	\$1,092 to \$130,000
Average Annual Wage	\$22,479.17
Hourly Wage Range	\$6.65 to \$83.33
Average Hourly Wage	\$13.59

SUCCESS STORY

JEFF O'HALLARON

Jeff O'Hallaron has been legally blind since childhood due to Stargardt's Macular Degeneration. He graduated from high school at Missouri School for the Blind in 2000. After high school graduation, Jeff worked at McDonald's, COMP U.S.A. and Advance Digital Solutions.

When Jeff applied for services from Rehabilitation Services for the Blind in January, 2003, he was working part-time and attending St. Louis Community College at Meramec. RSB provided assistance with tuition, books & supplies, living expenses and specialized visual aids, enabling him to complete his associate's degree and be admitted to the Honors College at the University of Missouri – St. Louis in the Fall 2004 Semester. He was provided orientation to the large UMSL Campus by a mobility instructor on the RSB staff.

RSB continued to provide assistance with college expenses including computer hardware and specialized adaptive screen enlargement software. Jeff completed his bachelor's degree in Business Administration in 2006 with a cumulative grade point average of 3.8. He was assisted by RSB in preparing for and passing the Graduate Record Exam, enabling him to be accepted into the Industrial and Organizational Psychology Master's Program at UMSL.

Jeff began this graduate program in the fall of 2006 and was again assisted by RSB with tuition, books, living expenses and computer technology needed in his coursework at UMSL. While in his master's program, Jeff worked part-time as a sales associate for US Cellular.

In May of 2008, he successfully completed his Master's Degree in Industrial and Organizational Psychology. RSB provided assistance with Jeff's job search and in November, 2008 he accepted a position of Talent Acquisition Specialist in the Human Resources Department of the Judevine Center for Autism in St. Louis. He has been working in this capacity since that time and utilizes a portable video magnifier provided by RSB in performing his job duties.

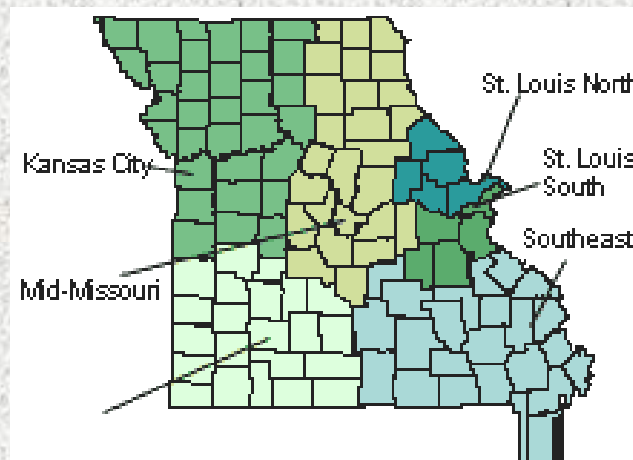
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CONTINUED VISION FOR THE FUTURE

- RSB's mission is the creation of opportunities for the personal and vocational success of blind or visually impaired clients.
- The SRC continues to work cooperatively with RSB to improve the services offered to meet what we consider to be the unique rehabilitation needs of clients with visual disabilities.
- We believe in the abilities of persons who are blind or visually impaired.
- Finally, the SRC believes that with the proper training, alternative skills and assistive technology that are provided through the specialized programs for persons with visual disabilities, individuals who are blind can be vocationally, socially and economically competitive.

